

# Huddersfield Local History Society

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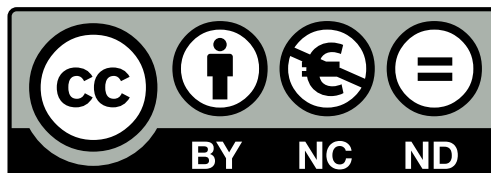
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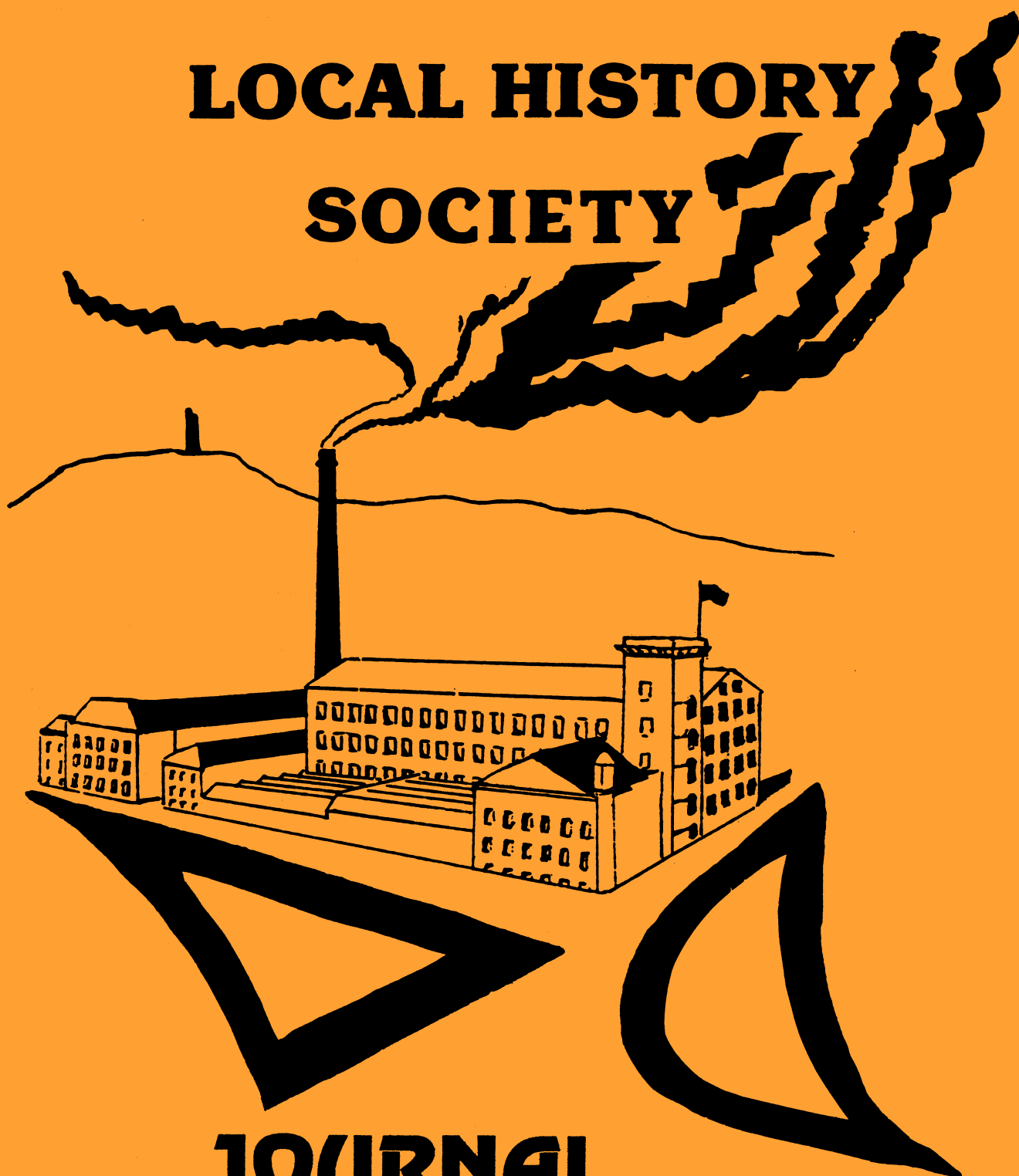
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# Huddersfield

## LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



## JOURNAL

### No. 2 SPRING 1991

#### SKELMANTHORPE'S FLAG OF FREEDOM.

*F Lawton.* (Information supplied by T Wainwright & S Sheead).

One of the Tolson Museum's long standing exhibits is a piece of linen, roughly six feet square, of uncertain origins and nearly 200 years old. Dating from 1819, its enduring place in Skelmanthorpe's history was chronicled with wry affection by the historian and naturalist Fred Lawton in the 1926 edition of "Hirst Buckley's Annual". Lawton, known as the "Grand Old Man of Skelmanthorpe", was a weaver by trade, spending much of his working life at Field & Bottrill's, but devoted much spare time to a plethora of local organisations including the Liberal Association, Cricket Club, Literary Society and the first Skelmanthorpe Urban District Council. As a local historian and naturalist his work was similarly prodigious, the following article being only a small part of his total output. The flag itself was presented by Lawton's family to the museum in 1948, the year after his death, at the grand old age of ninety.

My dear old master wishes me to write the story of my life, he thinks no one can do it so well as I can, and, as I lay neatly folded in my cosy drawer I let my mind go back to the day of my birth, a day in October, 1819. So I am 107 years old.

I was born in a house in Ratcliffe Street, Skelmanthorpe, next door to John Wainwright's old joiner's shop. My maker's name was a Mr Bird. He was a designer, and sold patterns to farmers and manufacturers.

I well remember how he handled me when I was a piece of white cotton with a border on each side, and how he nailed me to a large wooden frame, for I am 5 feet high and 5 feet 8 inches broad, and with what pride he decorated my white face with letters, figures and bordering. A few friends came in to see how I looked. I remember their conversation was about Oliver the spy, Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh. They talked in whispers, their faces were stern, their eyes were afire with anger and passion. I believe if Oliver the spy had walked into their presence he would have done no more mischief in this world. They told how a big meeting had been held at Manchester. When Henry Hunt, the Chairman had said about half-a-dozen sentences, a body of cavalry appeared on the scene with drawn swords, heads, arms and hands were cut off. The crowd was so densely packed they could not get away. From 10,000 throats the cry came "Butchers! Shame! Shame!" but the soldiers went on with their deadly work. In about a quarter of an hour nothing was left in St. Peter's Square but the dead, dying and wounded. It was to protest against this massacre that I was made.

It was one November evening when the decorations on my face were complete. About a dozen men came in to look at me. Oh, how they admired me, they said I was beautiful to look upon. How proud I felt as I listened to their praises. Then those rough looking men took off their caps and bowed their heads. Mr Bird stood up and in a solemn voice said "In the name of Almighty God I dedicate this flag to free meetings, free speech and every man a vote. The working classes were never worse off than they are to-day. Even when working, their wages are so low that their families are starving, yes, starving in this glorious England of ours, with its beautiful hills and valleys, its rivers and trees. The cattle on a hundred hills are well fed, they can herd together, frisk about, and bellow to their hearts content; the birds in the air can meet together, sing their songs and enjoy the free air of heaven; even the trees can be together in crowds in our woodland groves. When the wind blows they can moan, or whisper, or roar without interference. The



working man can do none of these things. Though his soul is as priceless as Lord Castlereagh's, he dare not call that soul his own. We are worse than slaves. We dare not meet together in public meetings afraid of being murdered by the soldiers. We dare not speak of that which lies nearest our hearts, afraid of being sent to prison. But we men of Skelmanthorpe are determined not to rest till some of these things are possible, or at anyrate, to make it easier for our children in their fight for freedom. So in the name of God I dedicate this flag, hoping it will help us in our great struggle for liberty"; and all the men said "Amen, Amen". After making arrangements for a meeting at Huddersfield on the following day the men went home.

I shall never forget that Saturday afternoon when I made my first public appearance. A crowd of children were waiting outside the house. I was tied to two long poles and carried down Brown Lane to the edge of the moor now known as Dice end. Here was a large crowd of men, women and children, they said "Oh, what a big un! isn't she a beauty?" Then they began reading the words printed on my face, some reading one compartment, some another. Amid this babel of voices a procession was

formed. We started off with a rousing cheer, and marched over Skelmanthorpe Moor to Shelley, where another crowd was awaiting us. Again I was admired, and several men joined the procession. Arriving at Kirkburton there was another and bigger crowd and here we had to stay a few minutes so people could admire me. Oh, how proud I felt as I marched at the head of those men. Arriving at Almondbury Bank where a great meeting was held, we were received with a great cheer from thousands of people. A Mr Dickinson of Dewsbury was Chairman. He made a sensible speech. Then Mr Robert Harrison of Huddersfield. He denounced the people responsible for the Peterloo Massacre, in language so violent and inflammatory that the newspapers refused to print it. After passing several resolutions we came home.

I was taken from the poles and carried home in a pocket, so I missed the admiration of the people. In the following week I was taken from my drawer and put in a wooden box. A grave had been dug in the garden and I was lowered into it. Just imagine my feelings when the clods of earth rattled on my coffin lid. What ups and downs in a lifetime, with no companions but worms, and the smell was indeed earthy. I heard Mr Bird say, "I think the constable wont find it now, I think its life will be spared for a few more meetings yet". With these words of comfort I was left to my own thoughts. If the constable had found me I should have been destroyed.

I was buried several times and taken up to go to meetings in the neighbourhood - Thornhill Lees, Barnsley and Kirkburton.

In 1832 I went to Wakefield where I had the pleasure of hearing Lord Morpeth and old Neddy Baines, of the Leeds Mercury, two real friends of the working classes. We rode to Wakefield and back in an old flour waggon.

The greatest meeting I attended was at Peep Green, a large stretch of waste ground between Hartshead and Roberttown, which is said to have been the largest political meeting ever held in England. There would be at least 25,000 there. Processions came miles in length with innumerable flags and brass bands. In appearance those joining in the memorable demonstration seemed to be operatives of the more intelligent class, and their demeanour throughout the proceedings was sober yet determined. The meeting was opened by the singing of Wesley's fine hymn

Peace doubting heart! my God's I am;  
Who formed me man forbids my fear;  
The Lord has called me by my name,  
The Lord protects, for ever near.

The singing of which from such a vast multitude had an indescribable effect, accompanied as it was by thousands of musical instruments. I shall never forget it. A touching prayer was then offered up by William Thornton, of Halifax. When the popular idol Fergus O'Connor stood up to address the meeting, the enthusiasm of the assembly was tremendous and it was a long time before the cheering, which volleyed like thunder, could be stilled to allow his stentorian voice to be heard. O'Connor's speech was warm and impassioned, but in wild fervour it fell far behind that of Bronterre O'Brian who was the most eloquent orator that ever stood on a political platform in this country.

After the usual resolutions were passed we came home. Though I was only one among thousands of flags, I received the homage, so I was satisfied.

I rejoiced with the people at the conclusion of the Crimean War in 1856. And again at the end of the American Civil War. Jos. Field and Sons of Garret Buildings, borrowed me for that occasion. When the rejoicings were over they threw me into a lobby, amongst some old healds, in the warehouse, and I lay there for twenty long, long, years. I was covered with dust and dirt; spiders crawled over me and made their nests in my folds; my proud spirit was hurt. I was glad when my dear old master rescued me one evening in September, 1884, and sent me to Huddersfield to be cleaned. I felt fresh and young again.

On the 11th October the same year, I again led the Skelmanthorpe Reformers to Huddersfield to a great franchise demonstration.

The first meeting was held in St. George's Square. About 40,000 people were present. The speakers were W H Leatham, M.P., E A Leatham, M.P. and Charles Bradlaugh, M.P. They had put some large letters on my head which said I was a relic of the past. I was looked at with great interest as we marched through the crowded streets. My vanity was satisfied and I came home well pleased.

I floated at the opening of our Wesleyan Chapel, and at the opening of our parish Church.

My work is now done and it has taken 100 years to do it. I have often heard my dear old master say that political changes are as slow as geological changes, and it can only be measured by hundreds of years. And it is true.

Yes, my work is done and I can now rest in peace. I belong to no society or organisation, but I do belong to Skelmanthorpe, and I hope I shall remain in Skelmanthorpe till the last thread in my body has rotted away.

*The illustration is reproduced by courtesy of Kirklees Cultural Services.*

\* \* \*

#### EARLY FIRE INSURANCE POLICIES OF THE HUDDERSFIELD AREA.

*Edward J Law.*

London's Guildhall Library has numerous deposits of insurance company records; principal among them are those of the Sun and Royal Exchange. The collections include an extensive series of policy registers of both companies, each of which had a countrywide network of agents by the late eighteenth century. Examination of the registers down to the 1830s suggests that neither company was represented in Huddersfield; the town being served by the Royal Exchange's Halifax agent and the Leeds agency of the Sun.

A modern index of both the Exchange and Sun registers for the period 1775 to 1787 has been put on microfiche, a copy being held at West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees. The index is a national one and the vagaries of eighteenth century spelling coupled with the fact that the original policies were written by agents without detailed knowledge of the Huddersfield locality lead to some peculiarities. The index is, however a most useful piece of work, saving extensive searches in the original registers.

Another most valuable source for the location of local policies is *The West Riding Wool Textile Industry 1770-1835* by D T Jenkins where are an

extensive series of references down to the 1830s. As the policies issued by each agent were often entered into the registers in batches a single reference may sometimes lead one to half a dozen policies.

The policy registers were entered up without any evident system and the only finding aid as one looks through is to watch for the agency town or the agent's name which usually appear in the same position in each entry. The search of one volume, which may only contain two or three months, is a time-consuming and eye-straining task; in case anyone proposes to use this source the registers I have searched in this manner are:

Sun Country Series Vol 72 (1806/7)

|                                 |                        |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Royal Exchange Vol 12 (1786/87) | Vol 17 (1789/90)       | Vol 18 (1790/91) |
| Vol 20 (1791)                   | Vol 21 (1791/92)       | Vol 22 (1791/92) |
| Vol 23 (1792)                   | Vol 32a (1797 to 1801) |                  |

The latter volume appears to have been dedicated to textile premises and yielded some 50 local entries against an average of 3 in the other volumes.

A card index of Yorkshire policies of the Sun from 1714 to 1731 was also searched, it revealed only two local policyholders, Thomas Thornhill of Fixby Hall and James Haigh of Fenny (Fenay Hall?) neither of whom were insuring local property.

The country losses register of the Sun was searched for the period 1803 to 1835. Despite the numerous, almost legendary, mill fires of the Huddersfield area, there was only one Huddersfield claimant, Christopher Eastwood, who in 1834 received £3.16.0. It may be that the Sun were stricter in the risks they accepted, though they regularly suffered individual losses in excess of £1,000 at Leeds and in the years 1824 and 1825 paid out over £12,600 to five claimants there. Certainly many of the policies stated that the mills conformed to the rules in the first class of the cotton or woollen risks. Possibly the provincial insurance companies took the higher risk premises at increased rates. It would also seem that some of the local fires were uninsured. It may be significant that the Colne Bridge mill of Thomas Atkinson, notorious for the fire in which seventeen children perished in February 1818, was insured with the Sun in June of that same year. Similarly Joshua Lockwood's mill at Upperhead Row which burnt down in 1828 appears in the Sun register in 1833. It is probable that the rebuilt mills were better risks, but it may be that neither concern had been previously insured. That was certainly the case with a fire at Ramsden Mill in April 1791, for the proprietors petitioned the West Riding Quarter Sessions for some relief from the county funds: they took out a policy with the Royal Exchange in September following.

A topographical index of the policies of the Hand in Hand Co. covering 1810 to 1846 lists only one local policy; their business being mainly in London.

The policy registers are large volumes and although the deposit by the Sun stipulates that photocopies of policies should be available, the library, in the interests of conservation, does not encourage wholesale copying. The following is a brief summary of all local policies known to the author who will be happy to supply fuller details of particular entries.

1777 William & John Whitacre of Longwood House, clothiers.

1778 Thomas Holroyd senior of Birkby, merchant.

- 1781 William & John Whitacre of Longwood House, clothiers.
- 1784 Joseph Firth of Toothill, merchant.
- 1785 Jos. Dransfield of Huddersfield, innholder.  
Jos. Brook of Huddersfield, bookseller & stationer.
- 1786 John Hudson of Huddersfield, merchant.  
John Houghton of Huddersfield, linen draper.
- 1787 Joseph & Thomas Atkinson of Huddersfield, merchants.  
Joseph Atkinson of Huddersfield, merchant.  
Michael Atkinson & Joseph Blackburn of Huddersfield, corn & wood millers.  
John Houghton of Huddersfield, linen draper. (2 policies)  
William Houghton of Intack near Huddersfield, cloth dresser.
- 1790 Thomas Nelson of Huddersfield, woolstapler.  
John Houghton of Huddersfield, linen draper.  
William, Richard & Jonathan Roberts of Farnley, merchants.
- 1791 Joseph Blackburn & John Atkinson of Huddersfield, wood & corn millers.  
Giles Gartside of Honley, dyer.  
John Varley of Slaithwaite, corn miller.  
Joseph, John & Betty Sykes, Lingards, millers.  
William Stocks of Huddersfield, linen draper.  
John Bottomley of Scammonden in Dean Head, clothier.  
John Houghton of Huddersfield, linen draper.  
George Woodhead of Hullen Edge, Elland, cotton manufacturer, on a mill at Marsden.  
Hugh Ramsden of Golcar, miller & John Batley of Crosland Edge, cloth dresser.  
John & Thomas Varley of Slaithwaite, clothiers.  
John Downing of Huddersfield, grocer & tea dealer.
- 1792 John Tavernor of Huddersfield, innholder.  
Robert Walker of Honley, merchant.  
Joseph & John Sykes of Lingards, millers.  
Clark Carter of Huddersfield, staymaker, hatter & linen draper.  
Joseph & John Sykes of Lingards, millers.  
Thomas, George & John Moorhouse of Moor Croft near Holmfirth, woollen manufacturers.
- 1793 John Brook, Thomas Varley & James Wood of Longwood, manufacturers.  
John Whitacre of Woodhouse, worsted manufacturer.  
Richard Atkinson of Aspley, frizer & manufacturer.  
John Battye of Crosland Hill, gent.  
Daniel Crosland of Greenhead, gent.  
Bramhall Dyson of Huddersfield, merchant.  
Spencer Dyson of Huddersfield, merchant.
- 1794 John Plowes of Leeds, merchant, on a mill at Marsden.
- 1795 Matthew Butterworth & John Dickinson of Holmfirth, clothmakers.
- 1796 Timothy Bentley of Lockwood, brewer.  
Joseph, Thomas & Law Atkinson of Bradley Mills, merchants.  
Joseph Atkinson of Bradley Mills, merchant.

- 1796 Godfrey & Nathaniel Berry of Danehouse Lane near Honley, woollen manufacturers.  
 Thomas Battye senior, James Battye & Thomas Battye junior, of Holmfirth, manufacturers of wool.  
 John Whitacre of Huddersfield, esquire.  
 Richard Atkinson of Aspley, woollen manufacturer.  
 George Woodhead of Hullen Edge, Elland, cotton manufacturer, on a mill at Marsden.  
 James & Thomas Thornton of Honley, corn millers & scribblers.  
 Timothy Bentley of Lockwood, brewer & scribbler.  
 Joshua Clegg of Huddersfield, innholder.  
 Thomas Hudson of Huddersfield, merchant.
- 1797 Joseph Bray of Holmfirth, miller.  
 George Beaumont of Leeds, merchant, on a mill at South Crosland.  
 Daniel Haigh of Marsden.  
 Joseph Eastwood of Meltham, clothier.  
 Joshua Woodhead of Upperthong, clothier.  
 Thomas Dransfield of Huddersfield, innholder & kerseymere printer.  
 John Fisher & Benjamin Mallinson of Huddersfield, merchants.  
 Richard Atkinson of Aspley, woollen manufacturer.  
 Benjamin North & Richard Newhouse of Huddersfield, scribblers.  
 John Bates of Whinny Bank near Huddersfield, woollen manufacturer.  
 Joseph Atkinson of Bradley Mills, merchant.  
 Godfrey & Nathaniel Berry of Deanhouse, woollen manufacturers.  
 Giles Gartside of Smithy Place, Honley.  
 Daniel Haigh of Marsden, drysalter.  
 John Varley of Slaithwaite, miller.  
 R W Abraham & John Horsfall of Huddersfield, merchants.  
 John Whitacre of Huddersfield, esquire.  
 Hugh Ramsden of Ramsden Mill in Golcar & John Batley of Crosland Edge, woollen manufacturers.  
 James Crosland & Daniel Battye of Huddersfield, merchants & woolstaplers.  
 William Brooke of Honley, merchant & manufacturer.  
 Abraham & John Horsfall of Huddersfield, merchants.  
 Joseph Crother of Huddersfield, plumber & glazier.  
 James & Thomas Thornton of Honley, millers.  
 Timothy Bentley of Lockwood, brewer & scribbler.  
 George Woodhead of Hullen Edge, Elland, on a mill at Marsden.
- 1798 Robert Tolson & John Kilner of Dalton, scribblers.  
 John Lister Kaye of Denby Grange, esquire.  
 Levi Sheard of Lepton, wool scribbler.  
 John Fisher & Benjamin Mallinson of Huddersfield, merchants.  
 George, Samuel & Francis Day of Colne Bridge, parish of Kirkheaton, iron forgers.  
 - Elmsall & - Beaumont of Honley Wood Bottom, woollen manufacturers.
- 1799 Benjamin Wilson of Dewsbury, William Walter Stables of Huddersfield & Richard & Joseph Tinker & Miles & George Netherwood of Deighton, scribblers.  
 William Roberts & Co of Farnley, woollen manufacturers.  
 John Whitaker of Lane near Huddersfield, dyer.  
 Francis Vickerman of Taylor Hill & Clement Dyson of Lockwood, woollen manufacturers.  
 John Holt of Longley Hall, corn miller.  
 Joseph Brooke of Honley, merchant & manufacturer.  
 George Beaumont of South Crosland, merchant.

- 1800 John Varley of Lingards, gent.  
 Edmund Eastwood & John Schofield of Slaithwaite, woollen manufacturers.  
 William Townend of Pontefract & John Varley of Lingards, gent.  
 Thomas Haigh of Slaithwaite, cotton manufacturer.  
 George & Walter Beaumont of South Crosland, merchants & manufacturers.  
 Francis Vickerman of Taylor Hill.  
 William & Richard Beaumont of Steps Mill, South Crosland, woollen manufacturers.  
 Mr Thomas Allen of Thorpe, parish of Almondbury, merchant.  
 Abraham & John Horsfall of Huddersfield, merchants.  
 Joshua & - Barber of Holme Bridge near Holmfirth, wool scribblers.  
 James Crosland of Almondbury, attorney at law.  
 James Crosland & Daniel Battye of Huddersfield, woolstaplers.  
 John Schofield & John Ramsden of Slaithwaite, woollen manufacturers.
- 1801 Daniel Haigh of Marsden, drysalter.  
 Joshua Woodhead of Holmfirth, woollen manufacturer.  
 Abraham & John Horsfall of Huddersfield, woollen manufacturers.  
 William Lockwood & Sons of Huddersfield. merchants.  
 Nathaniel Dyson of Meltham Mill, corn miller & scribbler.  
 John Haigh of Milnsbridge & John Moore of the Paddock, wool scribblers.  
 John & William Pilling, parish of Hartshead, corn millers.  
 Matthew & James Moorhouse of Scholes, scribblers.  
 William Beaumont of Huddersfield, clothdresser.  
 George & James Farrar of Holmfirth, woollen dyers.  
 Edmund Eastwood & John Schofield of Slaithwaite & John Varley of Lingards, woollen manufacturers.  
 John Varley of Lingards, woollen manufacturer.  
 William Beaumont of Steps Mill, woollen manufacturer.  
 John & William Brooke of Bankhouse Lower Mill, Longwood, woollen manufacturers.
- 1804 Thomas Battye of Lane near Holmfirth, wool scribbler.
- 1806 James Rawcliffe of Spink Myers, clothier.  
 John Armitage of Shaylys in Upperthong, woollen manufacturer.
- 1807 William Brooke of Honley, merchant & woollen manufacturer. (2 policies).
- 1813 Robert Turner of Sheffield, leather seller, on the White Lion alehouse, Huddersfield, tenant Langley.
- 1818 Thomas Atkinson of Colne Bridge, cotton spinner.
- 1823 William Spicer of Wakefield, corn merchant, on Kings Mill, Huddersfield. (2 policies)  
 John Sutcliffe of Huddersfield, woolstapler.  
 Richard Scholes of Shorehead, miller & farmer. (2 policies)
- 1830 Messrs Starkey, Buckley & Co of Longroyd Bridge, woollen manufacturers.  
 Joseph Armitage of Huddersfield, wool spinner.
- 1831 David Shaw Sons & Co of Huddersfield, woollen manufacturers.  
 Charles Eastwood of Linthwaite for the Ramsden Mill Co.

- 1831 Benjamin Scholefield of Moldgreen, weaver.  
 Thomas Davison of Huddersfield, innholder.  
 Hannah Armitage of Whiteley Bottom, Milnsbridge, innholder.  
 Thomas Blenkhorn of Aspley, brewer.  
 John North of Aspley, maltster.
- 1833 Joshua Lockwood of Upperhead Row, Huddersfield, manufacturer.
- 1835 Messrs Starkey Bros of Longroyd Bridge.
- 1836 Messrs Starkey Bros of Longroyd Bridge.

Examples of policies:-

23.5.1792 Joseph & John Sykes of Lingarths, parish of Almondbury, millers.

|                                                                                  |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| On their scribbling mill, stone & slated, in Slaithwaite, called Water Side Mill | £ 250        |
| On utensils & trade in trust including the machinery & going gears therein       | £ 750        |
|                                                                                  | <u>£1000</u> |

29.9.1797 Hugh Ramsden of Ramsden Mill in Golcar & John Batley of Crosland Edge, parish of Almondbury, woollen manufacturers.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| On the building of their scribbling & fulling mill in Linfits, parish of Almondbury. Conforming to the rules of the first class in the Cotton Risks, but no part of the cotton manufactory carried on. | £ 400        |
| Millwrights work including the fulling stocks & all going gear therein.                                                                                                                                | £ 100        |
| On the scribbling, willying & carding engines and all the fixed machinery                                                                                                                              | £ 500        |
| On moveable utensils & stock in trade & in trust                                                                                                                                                       | £ 100        |
| On a cottage adjoining                                                                                                                                                                                 | <u>£ 100</u> |

All stone built & slated. £1200

The scribbling & fulling mill in their own occupation.

14.10.1823 John Sutcliffe of Huddersfield, woolstapler.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| On a warehouse & offices with chambers over & cellar, all under one roof, near the Cloth Hall, used as a depot for sheeps wool & woollen goods, in the tenure of Joseph Clark & others, woollen cord manufacturers. |              |
| No process of manufacture nor stove therein                                                                                                                                                                         | £1900        |
| Tenement, kitchen & offices all adjoining, near, in tenure of John Berry, private.                                                                                                                                  | <u>£ 100</u> |

All stone & slated. Memo: hot pressing done in the cellar which £2000  
 is arched with stone and has no communication with the building above.

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BUYING A STATION.

*Clifford Stephenson.*

*As that "ornament to the town" undergoes yet another facelift, Clifford Stephenson recalls its acquisition by Huddersfield Corporation 23 years ago.*

In 1968 Huddersfield achieved still another municipal 'first' by buying its Railway Station; not merely a station but an exceptionally fine one; in John Betjeman's words "the most splendid station facade in England".

The story behind the purchase began several years earlier when the North Eastern Regional Board of British Rail, invited and entertained senior members of Huddersfield Council to a splendid dinner at the George Hotel. It was soon apparent that their hospitality was less inspired by brotherly love than by ulterior motive. Put bluntly they wanted to 'soften us up'. This was the period when British Rail, following the Beeching Report, was doing all it could to save money and increase income. One way of increasing income was to capitalize on the huge quantity of land and property owned, by selling or leasing some, to property developers -who were making fortunes out of the 'property boom'.

Some railway genius -or vandal- came up with the suggestion that if Huddersfield station front and administrative buildings -admittedly larger than the traffic justified- were demolished, the cleared land together with the forecourt, also owned by British Rail, would make a splendid site for which developers of offices or shops would pay a very substantial sum. Their problem was that to do this would require planning permission from the Corporation -hence their 'sweethearting' of our members. They were on very stony ground and their hospitality was wasted.

Realising that British Rail were willing to sell the station buildings, I canvassed the idea that the Corporation should buy them, amongst members of the Council -but with little success. Asked what we could do with it I suggested that it would make an excellent Industrial Museum, which could include preserved relics of the steam age, standing on the track nearest platform 1. Admittedly my arguments were idealistic rather than utilitarian and perhaps not suprisingly failed to inspire support at the time.

But the fates were kind, they provided another opportunity to revive my suggestion in 1968, the year of the Centenary of Huddersfield's Incorporation as a Borough.

To celebrate the Centenary, the Finance Committee reserved £100,000 to provide some kind of permanent memorial, not defined. Suggestions were invited; many were received; each in turn was rejected on the grounds of unsuitability, impracticability or cost. Only one found general favour, that to provide three memorial seats in each Ward of the Borough, the location of each to be decided by the Ward Councillor; and this was put in hand; but it only used up about a quarter of the available fund. No further suggestions being forthcoming I, somewhat tentatively, put forward again my earlier proposal to buy the Station, this time, in the absence of a rival alternative and with time running out for a decision to be made, it was agreed that purchase be negotiated. Shortly afterwards three of us met Mr Fiennes, the manager of British Rail North East Region, in the Mayor's parlour, to discuss the purchase. I never took part in a transaction so speedy and amicable. Fiennes was a character of determination, vision and decision (too much so for British Rail I believe -he was superseded by a less dynamic manager) and within half an hour -subject to the usual checks by officers and legal departments- the deal was struck. For a mere £52,650 Huddersfield became the owner of the Station Front Buildings, platform 1 and the rail track adjoining it, together with the forecourt -now used for car parking. I think it was a bargain financially and architecturally, a treasure beyond price.

As a temporary measure the station building was leased back to British Rail for twenty one years and the forecourt turned into the car park.

The rent received from British Rail for use of the buildings and the income from car parking, together, now more than pay the debt charges incurred by the purchase, so, in effect Huddersfield became the owner of this splendid monument of the great railway age, for nothing, and in the process notched up another 'first' as the only town to own its main railway station.

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[ BOOKSHELF ]  
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Published eye-witness accounts of local life are something of a rarity, so the latest Toll House Reprint *Three Huddersfield Diaries*, should make a welcome addition to the enthusiast's library. This handsome, if expensive (£35), collector's edition brings together the fragmentary writings of Arthur Jessop (1730-1746), Adam Eyre (1647-1649) and the Rev. Robert Meeke (1689-1694) in a more accessible format than they have previously enjoyed.

The brief "Journal or diary of Captain Adam Eyre of Hazlehead" is already too well known through the work of Dr Eagles to need repeating here, and Meeke's incumbency at Slaithwaite has made his diary one of the staples of Colne Valley history. It is however, the work of Arthur Jessop, apothecary of New Mill and member of Lydgate Chapel, that occupies the greater part of this book.

As a medical man, Jessop took a professional interest in the weather and its consequences. The year 1736, for example, suffered the "most sickly spring that hath been this 4 years" and an autumn that brought "fevers, pleurisies, agues and rheumatisms". On a personal level, he could remonstrate with Dame Clark of Totties when she employed "a running [quack] doctor"; bleed himself three times against the advice of Dr Thompson; and note that Widow Bales' "decoction of Foxglove", which she had taken "for a vomit" was followed swiftly by her untimely demise. As a private citizen, he recorded his purchases, 8/- for "a new coat, waistcoat and 2 pairs of breeches" and noted the local scandals - as when Mr Penn, Vicar of Emley "being overcome with wine got a fall from his horse and is dead".

But it is in the unlikely role of war correspondent that Jessop has attained a modest celebrity. A keen student of the local newspapers, which he consulted at Jonas Eastwood's in Holmfirth, Jessop kept detailed reports of the rebel Jacobite army's progress through Lancashire. It seemed that they could swarm across the Pennines at any time and there was "terrible consternation in Huddersfield, Holmfirth, Wooldale and Scholes". Fortunately the rebels never did arrive and so the guns and iron forks of Holmfirth were never put to the test, but Jessop and his contemporaries were not to know that, and their relief at the eventual Jacobite defeat was as tangible as the ringing church bells and bonfires of Holmfirth, Honley, Cawthorne and Penistone.

Rarity is not a term that could be applied to the "old photographs" genre, which seems to be mining an inexhaustible seam these days. The latest example, *Huddersfield in old photographs: a second selection*, collected by Hazel Wheeler (Alan Sutton; 1990, £7.95) follows hard on the heels of her previous collection and repeats the apparently successful formula of history as personal nostalgia - in over 250 "family-album" views.

The Huddersfield district has long enjoyed a notable reputation in the fields of sport and music, and this is reflected in two recently

published histories. *Huddersfield Town: a complete record 1910-1990* by Tony Frost (Breedon; 1990, £16.95) is over 400 pages of history, biography, statistics and photographs. Footballing statistics certainly predominate, but there are some interesting chapters on the Club's early history, notably the financial crisis of 1919 and the "glory days" that followed in the 1920s.

Sport has its ups and downs, but the quality of music making goes on undiminished, thanks largely to such enthusiastic amateur bodies as the Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra. *An improbable century: the life and times of the Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra 1891-1990* (£9.50) by Adrian Smith charts the development of this rather unlikely organisation from the initial meeting at John Taylor's home in 1891 to the triumphant celebration of a centenary achieved against all the odds. Far more than the usual celebratory pamphlet, this solid work of scholarship seeks to place the Orchestra in its wider social context. As society changed, so did the Orchestra - from the late Victorian period when the Holme and Colne valleys could boast more than fifty such organisations; through the "annus mirabilis" of 1913, to the post-war slump and that "long period of diminuendo" during the 1950s and 1960s. All is chronicled with painstaking and sympathetic thoroughness.

Current preoccupations with the National Curriculum lend a particular relevance to the origins of subjects now taken so much for granted, and Huddersfield can boast one of the key figures in the establishment of science as a curriculum subject. His name was George Jarman and his story is told by Mary Hirst in the current issue of *Old West Riding* (Vol 10. 1990). A "pioneer chemistry teacher", Jarman came to Almondbury as headmaster of the National School, but was soon persuaded to take his talents to the Huddersfield Mechanic's Institute and subsequently the Technical College. Indefatigable in his teaching, he even found time to become the first Borough Analyst, in 1873, and earn the praises of an official report that described him as "the outstanding teacher of chemistry in the north".

The same issue of *Old West Riding* also contains the curious story of the "Foundlers of Marsden". Philip Charlesworth unravels the folk memory of these indentured child labourers who worked at the cotton mill, known as "the factory", in Marsden at the end of the 19th century. Popular belief attributed them to the London Foundling Hospital, hence the nickname, but the young unfortunates employed by Messrs Haigh actually came from the parish workhouses of Westminster. At least twenty four such children were sent to Marsden in 1792, but the Haigh's bankruptcy in 1805 and a protective Act in 1816 prevented the continued 'export' of poor children. All that remains today is the foundler's house at Throstle Nest and a local legend.

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#### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A final tailpiece from the Local Studies Library proves that even census searching can have its lighter side. A trawl of the 1851 returns for land-locked Holmfirth revealed a family of Haddocks in residence at Underbank. Amongst the more prosaically named Whiteheads and Croslands, hand loom weaver Thomas and his wife Fanny were raising their young family of four. Daughters Elizabeth (12), Ellen (2 months) and the sons Wilson (4) and Wright (11) on whom the onerous burden of maintaining the family's unusual name should eventually fall.

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